

On: *Twin Cinema* by The New Pornographers  
(Matador Records; released August 2005)

Each song on The New Pornographers' *Twin Cinema* is like a really good meal: every course is a plateau higher and greater than the one before it, and at the end is dessert...something extraterrestrial, cloud-like, and chocolaty...it melts in your mouth, you're at the highest plateau on the mountain range and you can see for ever and ever, until the land meets the sky and the song is over.

If *Twin Cinema* is dinner at Le Cirque, most 2005 Grammy nominees, of all genres, would be a #2 value meal at McDonalds. The listener gets two, maybe three distinct and initially pleasurable tastes, but the first bite is always the best, and the reason we think it tastes good is a result of chemicals and brain synapses rather than a vast culinary knowledge and artful presentation of the five elemental tastes.

*Twin Cinema* would be umami. "Umami" is the fifth taste categorized by most foodies, and the Japanese word has no direct English translation. Mushrooms have it, and some cheeses. It's savory, and sour, and a little bitter, and possibly sometimes sweet...like a really good record.

What American music fans deemed "good" or "great" in 2005, if Grammy nominations are any indication of popular sentiment, is as predictable as a Big Mac. *Spin* magazine's band of the year (the Killers) has the same emotional effect as a fast-food taco...but that's what Americans like, isn't it? I suppose *Spin* magazine would prefer a drive-through at Taco Hell than to sit down with Thomas Keller at his restaurant. And therefore, you will find only a cursory mention of the New Pornographers in their, or any other, "Best of 2005" issue. Nor would *Twin Cinema* find any possible home at the Grammy's...I suppose the members of The New Pornographers will do like the rest of us on the date of those awards; carry on with life, have a drink, and give a smirk when the winners are listed in next morning's paper.